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Introduction

WHEN SUSANNAH WAS AN UNDERGRADUATE, she had no women professors in any subject. When she entered graduate school in the 1980s, there were women on the faculty at the university, but none in Jewish studies and very few women graduate students. In class, when she raised a question about women in Jewish history or brought a feminist analysis to a text, she was met with dismissiveness (“that’s not relevant” or “let’s move on”), and male professors and graduate students would go off for lunch or coffee together without including her. As a graduate student, she developed a course, “The Feminist Critique of Judaism.” After she graduated, a male adjunct took over the course and changed its title to “The Jewish Woman.” No women served on her dissertation committee because there were no tenured women professors in her subfield.

When Sarah was a graduate student in the early 2000s, she had several women professors, including one on her dissertation committee. In her day, more and more women were entering the field as graduate students, but she still saw both the canonical works of Jewish studies and the towering scholars in the field as overwhelmingly male. Trans and nonbinary scholars were rarely included at all. Now she is a tenured full professor in a Jewish studies program that had few women faculty in the mid-1990s but whose core faculty is now made of five women and seven men.

In our careers, both of us have had wonderful male mentors and colleagues. We have also witnessed sexism and harassment.

When we look back, we see a field that has not always welcomed people who are not white, Jewish, cisgender, or straight men, or people who want to study gender or use feminist methods. But we also recognize how much has changed.

From the outset, we have struggled with how to talk about women and gender without essentializing or suggesting that a man-woman gender binary is an objective truth. Much of our struggle stems from the fact that in both the historical moments we discuss and our present moment, many people believe and act as if the categories of men and women are fixed and unchangeable. We understand gender to be constructed by historical and cultural forces, but we also recognize that those cultural and historical forces have created a normative male-female binary in most of the contexts within which Jewish studies has operated. By describing worlds in which many people assume that there are men and there are women, we do not mean to endorse this view of the world, but we equally do not want to deny that these binarisms strongly shape the academic and professional worlds of Jewish studies scholars. In this book, we focus largely on people who identify (or identified) as women because we believe that we can demonstrate many of the gendered issues the field faces through their stories.

Our decision to write this book together arose from our frustration over recent scholarship in Jewish studies that excludes, ignores, or tokenizes women. We began collecting evidence: We counted the anthologies, conferences, and editorial boards of journals that had no women, or had just one or two. We noted scholarship that ignores gender in inexcusable ways, such as studies of pogroms that glossed over rape with a passing phrase, and studies that think about gender only in relation to women, as if femaleness is the only gender.

Speaking to scholars in the field, we were very disturbed to find that so many people, from graduate students to full professors, have been targets of gendered exclusion, denigration, harassment, or even assault. We present their accounts anonymously and ask our readers to give them careful attention. We know women in

nearly every workplace have had similar experiences; here, we ask what is specific to Jewish studies. Drawing a connection between our quantitative data on citation of women with the discrimination and harassment reported to us leads us to question the culture of the field. We look at the field's history as it first took shape during the nineteenth century, and we look at specific subfields to understand examples of the institutional structures and ethos that work against women. Women's experiences point to a culture of sexism within the field that requires repair.

Today the field of Jewish studies has expanded enormously in the United States and around the world and enjoys interest from scholars in adjacent fields. As growing numbers of women and nonbinary scholars have entered Jewish studies in the last decades, they have expanded the study of women, gender, and sexuality. While we celebrate the professional opportunities that have grown, we also present serious problems that require attention. Our book takes stock: Where do we stand today, and how did we get here?

What obstacles face us? We begin by presenting quantitative data regarding percentage of women as professors of Jewish studies, citations of women scholars in academic journals in the field, and women as journal editors and board members, and we examine how gender is presented in major textbooks. We tell the history of the field: the nineteenth-century *Wissenschaft* movement (chapter 4), its connections to traditional religious study (chapter 5), and the growth of Jewish studies in US institutions (chapter 6). We connect those histories to our contemporary moment, where we focus on silencing. Manels, manthologies, mansplaining, and harassment: there are crucial links between the exclusion of women from public academic forums and the harassment that so many women have experienced.

Let us be clear: our book is not an ethnography, nor have we undertaken formally constructed surveys. We have participated for years in this field, witnessed the treatment of women and their scholarship, listened to the difficulties faced by women and nonbinary students and colleagues, and talked at length with more

than eighty colleagues. We present their voices anonymously, analyze their experiences, and consider both the causes and the solutions. Like our interlocutors, we love our work in the field of Jewish studies, our research and teaching, and the interesting ways Jewish studies complicates disciplines and methods. Our book focuses on a problem and how to fix it. We recognize that not all women have been harassed, and many men have been supportive allies, and we hope our book will convince more of our colleagues to help improve the culture of the field.

Jewish studies exhibits the gender problems we see throughout universities. Within the academy, scholars have long known that student evaluations of teaching show bias with respect to race and gender.¹ Hiring practices have involved explicit discrimination as well as implicit bias, despite legal and professional efforts to avoid both.² Women's careers are affected by entering a world geared to men, in which childbearing years coincide with graduate school and efforts to obtain tenure, paid parental leave is not guaranteed, care for elderly relatives falls unevenly on women, and the glass ceiling has yet to be shattered.³

1. John A. Centra and Noreen B. Gaubatz, "Is There Gender Bias in Student Evaluations of Teaching?" *Journal of Higher Education* 71, no. 1 (2000): 17–33; Therese A. Huston, *Empirical Research on the Impact of Race and Gender in the Evaluation of Teaching*, Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (Seattle, WA: Seattle University Press, 2005); Therese A. Huston, *Research Report: Race and Gender Bias in Student Evaluations of Teaching*, Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (Seattle, WA: Seattle University Press, 2005); Jane Sojka, Ashok K. Gupta, and Dawn R. Deeter-Schmelz, "Student and Faculty Perceptions of Student Evaluations of Teaching: A Study of Similarities and Differences," *College Teaching* 50, no. 2 (2002): 44–49; and Joey Sprague and Kelley Massoni, "Student Evaluations and Gendered Expectations: What We Can't Count Can Hurt Us," *Sex Roles* 53, nos. 11–12 (2005): 779–93.

2. Laura Hirschfield, "Not the Ideal Professor: Gender in the Academy," in *Disrupting the Culture of Silence: Confronting Gender Inequality and Making Change in Higher Education*, ed. Kristine De Welde and Andi Stepnick (New York: Routledge, 2014), 205–14.

3. There is evidence that when it is available to all, parental leave often benefits men professionally (who may take the time off from teaching to advance research)

Universities, like many businesses and professions, have instituted DEI (diversity, equity, and inclusion) mandates with obligatory training for all faculty and staff. However, these alone will not fix bias or discrimination. The problems are too complex, often too subtle, and rooted in social systems that extend far beyond the university. Nor are projects for different kinds of inclusion always aligned. For example, we mention in chapter 6 the tensions between some second-wave feminists and some Jewish Zionists. Colleagues in Jewish studies have also expressed concern that their work is marginalized within some progressive academic agendas in which they want to participate.⁴

The issues raised by second-wave feminists frequently focused on the difficulties faced by white, middle-class women, marginalizing women of color, women of lower socioeconomic status, queer women, and trans and nonbinary people. Today, concerns about women's statuses in society may seem dated to some of our readers, but our research has taught us that the problems faced by people who identify as women within the field of Jewish studies remain serious. We also see connections between the issues that face women and those experienced by queer, trans, and nonbinary people as well as by non-Jews in our field. While we recognize that different strategies will be important for each group, we also see solidarity. In his oft-quoted "Letter from a Birmingham Jail," Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. wrote, "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one

more than it does women. Gretal Leibnitz and Briana Keafer Morrison, "The Eldercare Crisis and Implications for Women Faculty," in De Welde and Stepnick, *Disrupting the Culture of Silence*, 137–45.

4. Marla Brettschneider has been a pioneer in feminist and multicultural academic communities; see Brettschneider, *Jewish Feminism and Intersectionality* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2016); and Brettschneider, *The Narrow Bridge: Jewish Views on Multiculturalism* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1996).

directly, affects all indirectly.”⁵ While our focus is primarily on women, we have also examined the situation of LGBTQ+ members of our profession, and we believe that improving the situation for each will improve the situation for the field as a whole.

All of us face gendered cultural problems beyond the university. A 2018 study undertaken by economists argues that the sexism young girls experience in childhood affects their lifelong earnings and accomplishments; growing up in a sexist culture brings a lifetime of consequences. It also found that sexism in a woman’s workplace had additional negative effects on her socioeconomic outcomes.⁶ The study was limited to white adults and did not include factors of religious belief or practice, but the findings urge us to recognize the role of cultural attitudes imbued in childhood when we try to understand why some women do not actively seek promotions, salary raises, and positions of leadership, let alone why they fail to report incidents of assault or actively support men who admit they commit harassment. In other words, sexism functions very broadly: as institutional structures and cultural attitudes held by people who then transmit those same ideas to others. The economists conclude that “sexism in a woman’s state of birth and in her current state of residence . . . lower her wages and likelihood of labor force participation.” This includes the sexism where a woman works, where “labor market outcomes seem to operate chiefly through the mechanism of market discrimination by sexist men. . . . Prejudice-based discrimination, undergirded by prevailing sexist beliefs . . . may be an important driver of women’s

5. Martin Luther King Jr., “Letter from a Birmingham City Jail,” in *A Testament of Hope: The Essential Writings and Speeches of Martin Luther King, Jr.*, ed. James Melvin Washington (San Francisco: Harper, 1968), 289–302; 290.

6. Kerwin Kofi Charles, Jonathan Guryan, and Jessica Pan, “The Effects of Sexism on American Women: The Role of Norms vs. Discrimination,” *Journal of Human Resources* (published online before print: November 10, 2022), <https://doi.org/10.3368/jhr.0920-11209R3>.

outcomes in the US.”⁷ Sexist culture, in other words, limits women’s ability to achieve parity with men in the labor market, as it prevents them from receiving offers for high-ranking positions and earning commensurate salaries. In the university, sexism also affects everyone’s careers, hindering them from engaging with the scholarship of women and genderqueer scholars that often presents new ideas.

In addition to sharing the same gendered issues within and beyond the university, scholars in Jewish studies also face some distinctive issues. In this book, we describe what is distinctive about Jewish studies—that is, how the history and culture of the field have created particular assumptions about gender. We also find it worthwhile to think about the dynamics of Jewish studies and gender as a case study for related fields. Studies like ours have been undertaken in a variety of academic fields, from STEM to philosophy, and our study allows us to put Jewish studies’ gender issues into focus and context.⁸ Is Jewish studies worse than some other fields with respect to gender issues? Yes. Is it also better than some? Yes. Beyond a simplistic better/worse comparison, we explore how particular dynamics came to be, how they may differ among subfields, and what we can do to change the status quo.

To take an example of what this field questioning looks like, we might look to philosophy. The field of philosophy has long had a

7. Kerwin Kofi Charles, “Research Brief: The Effects of Sexism on American Women: The Role of Norms vs. Discrimination,” University of Chicago Becker Friedman Institute for Economics website, August 1, 2018, <https://bfi.uchicago.edu/insight/research-summary/the-effects-of-sexism-on-american-women-the-role-of-norms-vs-discrimination/>.

8. Among the many studies of women in the academy in recent decades, we note Eileen Pollack, *The Only Woman in the Room: Why Science Is Still a Boys’ Club* (Boston: Beacon, 2015); Paula J. Caplan, *Lifting a Ton of Feathers: A Woman’s Guide to Surviving in the Academic World* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993); and Evelyn Fox Keller, *Reflections on Gender and Science* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1985).

very small percentage of women at the highest academic ranks.⁹ Recently, scholars have brought to the fore long-neglected women philosophers, while others have questioned the gendered nature of foundational methods of philosophy.¹⁰ Catherine Gardner's examination led her to ask "how and why certain forms [of philosophical arguments] become excluded."¹¹ She transformed her own question from a search for women's philosophical writings to a critique of philosophical practice: Just what gets counted as "philosophical"? Has the field of philosophy defined itself in such a way that it has become a tool for excluding women? We might ask the same questions of Jewish studies when we hear that over the course of Jewish history, women wrote no texts until recently, so that women's history cannot be included in the field. Yet that rationale rests on three assumptions: texts serve as the best and most important evidence (though much may be learned from material evidence and ethnography); stated authorship reflects reality (though women's contributions may have been unacknowledged or women may have used male pseudonyms); texts provide information rather than puzzles to be deciphered (though contrary evidence may be apparent if different tools of interpretation are used). One problem is the archives that construct future scholarship: If these archives limit themselves to documents and

9. For example, Sally Haslanger, "Changing the Ideology and Culture of Philosophy: Not by Reason (Alone)," *Hypatia* 23, no. 2 (Spring 2008): 210–23; Sally Haslanger, "Gender and Race: (What) Are They? (What) Do We Want Them to Be?," *Nous* 34, no. 1 (2000): 31–55.

10. Mary Ellen Waithe, *A History of Women Philosophers*, 4 vols. (Boston: M. Nijhoff, 1987–95); see also Eva Feder Kittay and Linda Martin Alcoff, *The Blackwell Guides to Feminist Philosophy* (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell, 2008); Karen J. Warren, *An Unconventional History of Western Philosophy: Conversations between Men and Women Philosophers* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow, 2006); Mary Warnock, *Women Philosophers* (London: Orion, 1996); Sarah Tyson, *Where Are the Women? Why Expanding the Archive Makes Philosophy Better* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2019).

11. Catherine Villanueva Gardner, *Rediscovering Women Philosophers: Philosophical Genre and the Boundaries of Philosophy* (Boulder, CO: Westview, 2000), 1.

materiality, how will we learn about the private lives of women and their subjectivity?¹²

Throughout our study, we understand sexism and gender inequality as issues of institutions, structures, and cultures. This means that our story has no easy villains. We neither blame individual men for the overarching problem nor suggest that the solution will come when we root out sexism from the hearts and minds of a few bad apples. In examining sexism's wide range of manifestations, from the omission of scholarship by women and genderqueer people to harassment and sexual assault, we see it as stemming from a large cultural framework that requires repair. Ultimately, we are calling for widespread transformations in structures, academic cultures, and shared expectations.

One of the prominent ways we see issues of sexism framed is as a problem of bad apples, especially concerning the issue of sexual harassment or assault, an issue that forms the core of chapters 2 and 3. While it is certainly true that some individuals are guilty of harassment and assault, it is also true that a culture characterized by uneven power dynamics, assumptions, and willingness to look the other way, among other things, facilitates those actions. The underlying culture and structures reproduce sexism and exclusion in Jewish studies scholarly spaces. We see some similarities in the reactions to harassment and sexism: some people acknowledge the issue but see it as an individual problem (the bad apple theory, in which the solution is identifying and excluding the perpetrator); others will dismiss the issue as an essential feature of gender, about which there is little to be done ("boys will be boys" or "women just don't write about that topic"). We are interested in those dynamics because we see changing them as the key to changing the culture.

Thinking about sexism as an individual problem might at first seem appealing. If we can rid our organizations of the offenders,

12. There are now archives, such as the Jewish Women's Archive, that dedicate their collections to the goal of making Jewish women's history visible.

then our problem will be solved. However, history has shown us that this approach does not work. Something in the structures or the cultures allows the issues to continue—sometimes even when everyone involved means well. The bad apple theory also has a very difficult time accounting for why well-meaning people might still slip up. If sexism is just about someone’s internal motivations and ethics, what do we make of the man who intentionally champions female graduate students but still discusses women only in the “gender week” near the end of his syllabus? How is it that even avowed feminists can find themselves writing a paper that cites few women? The answers cannot fully be found in individual hearts or minds, and so the solutions cannot take place only there.

We also do not think the gendered problems with academic culture can be boiled down to consent. Ensuring that people engaged in sexual activity are consenting adults is crucial, but this is insufficient as a model to cover all personal and professional relationships. In professional settings, power differences can so strongly color interactions and requests that we should not see all responses as fully freely chosen. For example, if a senior colleague asks a junior colleague to teach him how to use the university’s teaching software program or take on additional service work, the junior colleague is very likely to say yes, even if they cannot afford the time. If they decline, there may be costs. A binary yes-or-no model of consent does not capture the dynamic here; we cannot simply say, “Well, she said yes to that service commitment, so it is her own doing.” Exhorting women and underrepresented faculty to “learn to say no,” as if the problem were that they took on additional tasks, will similarly not solve the problem.¹³ Nor does consent address the exclusion of minoritized scholars from academic projects or conversations.

This book draws on private interviews we conducted with over eighty scholars, including nonbinary people, non-Jews, people of

13. Karen Pyke, “Faculty Gender Inequity and the ‘Just Say No to Service’ Fairy Tale,” in De Welde and Stepnick, *Disrupting the Culture of Silence*, 83–95.

color, and people with disabilities; quotes from these interviews appear in italicized paragraphs throughout the book. The interviewees include graduate students, postdocs, junior professors, adjuncts, and senior full professors in Jewish studies. We heard their stories of discrimination, bias, harassment, and assault. Only three told us they never experienced or witnessed discrimination or bias in their careers. We heard multiple accounts of the same sorts of experiences, making it clear to us that such problems are widespread and affect people at all stages in their academic careers. In what follows we report the experiences they related to us, withholding their names (except where their accounts have already been published elsewhere), because their voices must be heard. Although academic societies, like universities, have established rules of behavior and committees to adjudicate complaints, almost none of the people we spoke to had filed complaints with the relevant authorities. Why not? We address the reasons in chapter 3 by presenting two cases discussed extensively in public media.

What we learned from our interviews led us to ponder why deep-seated biases remain so powerful, permitting some scholars to feel it is appropriate to exclude women from academic conferences and publications, or to think it is ethically permissible to harass or mock women, or that they can evade penalties when they assault women. For women, the consequences can be enduring and often devastating. Incidents that occurred years earlier can remain vivid and painful, leaving women feeling deeply unsure of their place in the academy, or even uncertain of their right to a scholarly voice.

We recognize that women are too often omitted from the image of the scholar. Most of us have seen the iconography at universities dominated by depictions of men: photographs, paintings, busts, and sculptures adorn countless scholarly libraries and meeting rooms. One of us took part in a Jewish studies tenure and promotion committee in an elegant room surrounded by walls holding large, framed paintings—all of them of men. The case under discussion regarded a candidate who would be only the second woman

in her large department to receive tenure. Little wonder that women faculty on campus are so often misidentified as staff or students.

Despite all the problems we uncovered, we want to emphasize that a host of remarkable women and nonbinary scholars have entered the field of Jewish studies in the last fifty years and brought with them important changes. Scholarship about gender and interpretations drawing from feminist theory, sexuality studies, disability studies, studies of racism, postcolonial analysis, and many other theoretical modalities have grown during the past several decades. Some women now teach in doctoral programs, some hold endowed chairs, some have won awards for their publications, and some have served as presidents of academic associations.

Moreover, the field of Jewish studies in North America may now contain slightly more women than men. In 2022, the Association for Jewish Studies (AJS) reported that 47.6 percent of its members identify as women or female, 43.1 percent identify as men or male, and 1.4 percent as genderqueer or gender non-conforming; 7.7 percent preferred not to answer or left the question blank.¹⁴ These numbers include people at all stages, from graduate students to emeritus faculty, from part-time adjuncts to full-time tenured professors, as well as people in related fields, such as library science. The proportion of nonmale-identified scholars in Jewish studies is higher than some academic fields, such as philosophy, computer science, economics, mathematics, and chemistry, and is similar to the overall gender balance in the humanities.¹⁵

14. Melinda Man, AJS staff, email correspondence with Sarah Imhoff, August 1, 2022. Rounding leads to totals that are not precisely 100 percent.

15. Kristen Monroe, Saba Ozyurt, Ted Wrigley, and Amy Alexander, "Gender Equality in Academia: Bad News from the Trenches, and Some Possible Solutions," *Perspectives on Politics* 6, no. 2 (2008): 221; Kristen Renwick Monroe, Jenny Choi, Emily Howell, Chloe Lampros-Monroe, Crystal Trejo, and Valentina Perez, "Gender Equality in the Ivory Tower, and How Best to Achieve It," *PS: Political Science and Politics* 47, no. 2 (2014): 418–26 and "Trends in the Demographics of Humanities

Yet Jewish studies continues to have a gender problem. Women and nonbinary scholars are clustered in certain areas of research while being woefully underrepresented in other areas; women are very much present at the junior levels but less so at the senior levels of academic institutions; women's scholarship is not cited as often as men's; trans and nonbinary scholars' work is often seen as marginal; scholarship about gender is too often missing from research projects, textbooks, and course syllabi. All too often, scholarship by men dominates conferences, journals, and anthologies, with others excluded from the very important conversations that propel scholarship forward. In short, women are qualified scholars who publish important work, yet they are not always included, and paths to seniority can be rocky and uncertain. This is a book about the enduring problem of bias in Jewish studies: why it happens, and what to do about it. As a colleague wrote to us, "the marginalization of women in the field itself has a history—and is in fact baked into the very formation of the field."

We examine the origins of Jewish studies in several ways. Chapter 4 looks at its formative years in nineteenth-century Germany, when men dominated the field and imagined their work as historians in eroticized metaphors. Chapter 5 traces those origins within several subdisciplines to focus on the different kinds of gendered problems and patterns in fields ranging from archeology to Holocaust studies. In chapter 6, we look at the economic and political origins of Jewish studies at contemporary US universities and the relationship of the field with other interdisciplinary programs. Demonstrating the origins, history, and contemporary manifestations of marginalization, discrimination, and harassment within Jewish studies is one purpose; our goal is to bring change

Faculty," American Academy of Arts and Sciences, accessed December 2, 2023, <https://www.amacad.org/humanities-indicators/higher-education-surveys/trends-demographics-humanities-faculty>. These data suggest that faculty gender ratios in the humanities as a whole have remained stable—at right about 50 percent—for more than a decade.

by articulating the problems, revealing their connections, and proposing some solutions.

We write together because we share convictions and some viewpoints. But we also draw on different strengths. We represent two academic generations, having received our doctorates about twenty years apart. Our research overlaps but also stretches into different fields: Susannah has worked on modern Jewish history and thought in Germany and North America, antisemitism, race and racism, and feminist theories and theologues. Sarah has written on masculinity, disability, Zionism, American Jews, and race in US contexts both past and present, as well as historical transnational subjects, including Israel/Palestine. Both of us are tenured, but Susannah teaches at a private, Ivy League, R1 university with an undergraduate program, and Sarah teaches at a large, R1 state university with a doctoral program. We have each learned from the other through our collaboration and shared concerns about the field and about the place of women and nonbinary scholars within it. We present this book not as an indictment but as an assessment of the field with an eye to its history and a concern for its future.

In writing about women, we include trans and cis women, and we think about gender as a social construct—that is, we do not see an essential maleness or femaleness, nor do we view binarism as fixed. In this way, we understand connections between women and other scholars who hold minoritized identities, such as nonbinary scholars in the field of Jewish studies, and scholars who are not white Ashkenazi Jews or who are not Jewish at all. We also give attention to biases toward scholars of color in the field, especially to Black and Asian scholars, and we hope that this attention will inspire additional research focused specifically on scholars of color. (Because some subfields in Jewish studies have a very small number of trans scholars or scholars of color, we often do not identify them as such when we are quoting them because that would compromise their anonymity.) We are not claiming to present a comprehensive study but one that calls attention to biases that will receive, we hope, further attention—and correction.

We note that sexism can be interpersonal or systemic, and we also draw attention to the ways that it is part of an academic culture. The problem is not only what is said or done to women; it is also the exclusion of women and nonbinary scholars, including from informal gatherings—for instance, meals at conferences—at which important conversations occur, collaborative projects begin, and people learn about one another’s academic interests. When casual gatherings include only men, networking creates male-dominant systems that are unaware of women and nonbinary scholars and their scholarship and keep others from the intellectual exchanges that enhance our work. Funding for these scholars’ studies may also suffer when they are excluded from informal conversations because these exclusions limit their professional networks. Gendered exclusion may be thoughtless, or it may be deliberate, such as with the “Mike Pence problem,” in which men refuse to engage one on one with female colleagues, ostensibly for reasons of propriety. In some countries and in some subfields, men direct the major foundations that offer grants to scholars and to almost all the large institutes that employ numerous graduate students, postdocs, and junior faculty. Male networking assists in raising funds for such foundations and institutes, both from the government and from private sources.¹⁶ When women’s scholarship is not widely known and respected, women are less often asked to edit important volumes, invited to participate in conferences, and given grants for their projects.

We recognize that the field of Jewish studies is growing and now has an international footprint. Although our focus in this book is North America, we are well aware that many in our field spend time as students or researchers in Israel, Europe, North Africa, South and Central America, Asia, and elsewhere. Germany has more Jewish studies research programs than other European

16. For a larger discussion of how personal (gendered) networks affect philanthropy, see Amornrat Apinunmahakul and Rose Anne Devlin, “Social Networks and Private Philanthropy,” *Journal of Public Economics* 92, no. 1–2 (2008): 309–28.

countries. Spain—which at the turn of the century established the first professorship in Jewish studies, held by Avraham Shalom Yahuda starting in 1915—today has a lively program of scholarship on Jewish history and philosophy, which flourished in Iberia prior to 1492.¹⁷ China has several universities offering courses in Jewish studies;¹⁸ the largest, an endowed program at the University of Nanjing, is directed by Xu Xin, a prolific scholar of Jewish literature and history. Israel is a central location for the libraries, archives, and universities in which many of us study, and archeologists work at specific locales in Israel and Palestine. Japan now has flourishing academic programs, and India has at least two Israel studies programs. Jewish studies is a field at Egyptian and Moroccan universities. While we have not systematically examined Jewish studies in other countries, many of the people we interviewed helped us see that the problems we address in this book have international resonance. Women scholars in Europe and Israel reported experiences that mirror those of women in the United States. For example, a woman who held a fellowship at a prestigious institute in Germany told us about a man who propositioned her in explicit sexual terms and then denigrated her scholarship when she rejected him. Across geographies, we heard similar stories describing dismissive attitudes and exclusion from conferences, anthologies, and conversations, as well as sexual harassment. No country has fully and successfully embraced gender parity and feminist scholarship. We believe the intellectual vibrancy of any academic field requires collegiality: politeness, responsiveness, and respect.¹⁹

17. Michal Rose Friedman, “Orientalism between Empires: Abraham Shalom Yahuda at the Intersection of Sepharad, Zionism, and Imperialism,” *Jewish Quarterly Review* 109, no. 3 (Summer 2019): 438.

18. See Song Lihong, “Reflections on Chinese Jewish Studies: A Comparative Perspective,” in *The Image of Jews in Contemporary China*, ed. James Ross and Song Lihong (Brighton, MA: Academic Studies, 2016), 206–33.

19. We take seriously the critiques of “collegiality” as a term rooted in the image of scholars as white and male. We use the term here to emphasize the frequent

Moreover, ours is an era of political polarization, rising anti-semitism and racism, and increasing authoritarianism, in which many of the great advances made in human rights and social justice are under threat or being eviscerated. Women's bodily autonomy, crucial for social and economic advancement, is threatened by governments that ban abortion, fail to fund day care, criminalize homosexuality, and do not provide affordable health insurance. In the United States, professorial tenure is under threat from some Republican governors and state legislatures, as is the freedom to teach certain topics, including racism, the Holocaust, gender, and sexuality.

We recognize that describing women's experiences will not be the same as describing all the marginalization within Jewish studies experienced in particular by scholars who are Asian, Black, Latine, trans, and nonbinary, and by those who are not Jewish, and we are indebted to researchers of intersectionality for their analyses of the ways race, gender, ability, and sexuality mutually inform one another.²⁰ In our study, we emphasize gender, but issues of sexuality, race, and Jewishness are never far from the surface.

In Jewish studies, these intersections can take on particular forms. Scholars of color are often marginalized or excluded from Jewish studies spaces and conversations. Sometimes that is because interlocutors assume that a scholar of color is not Jewish and that only Jews can be scholars of Jews, and sometimes it is because of a more generalized racism. Queer, trans, and nonbinary Jewish experiences are often treated as marginal topics that need

exclusion of women from the informal academic conversations that are crucial to intellectual stimulation and academic advancement. See Shawn Copeland, "Collegiality as a Moral and Ethical Practice," in *Practice What You Preach: Virtues, Ethics, and Power in the Lives of Pastoral Ministers and Their Congregations*, ed. James F. Keenan and Joseph Kotva (Franklin, WI: Sheed and Ward, 1999), 315–32; and Stacey Floyd-Thomas, "The Problem That 'Lies' Within: How 'Collegiality' Undermines the Academy," *Religious Studies News* 24, no. 4 (October 2009): 31.

20. For a collection of classic as well as newer essays, see Kimberlé W. Crenshaw, *On Intersectionality: Essential Writings* (New York: New Press, 2017).

not be addressed in mainstream Jewish studies scholarship, as we will demonstrate in our discussion of textbooks in chapter 1. In the past, when we have urged inclusion of women, some colleagues have countered that other issues are more pressing.²¹ We acknowledge the existence of these other issues and see them as interconnected with gender-based exclusion. We have heard, loud and clear, the voices of Black, Asian, non-Jewish, trans, and nonbinary colleagues about the frequent discrimination they have experienced in the field.

One of us recently had an email exchange that helps illustrate the relationship of scholarly identity and diversity of viewpoints. After writing to a senior scholar who edited a volume that included few women writers, we received a sadly typical response: he had invited some women to contribute to his book, but none had said yes. While the invitation was a good first step, it indicates a deeper problem. We suggested to him that if he truly valued women's participation, perhaps next time he might begin a project by asking women scholars in his network what they consider to be important issues and then formulate the publication or conference with that in mind. His reply: "Now that gives me something to ponder." It is indeed time to ponder.

21. For example, Marcin Wodziński has argued that while women might be excluded, the more important issue is that non-Jews are excluded. "Where Are All the Others in Jewish Studies," *Forward*, January 16, 2020, <https://forward.com/culture/438320/where-are-all-the-others-in-jewish-studies/>.

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